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ABSTRACT

Data for the Y95 cohort (first interviewed in 1995 when in Year 9) of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth were used to analyze the vocational education and training (VET) activities and experiences of Australian noncompleters of year 12 in their initial postschool years. Approximately 37% of the noncompleters had undertaken some type of VET study in their initial postschool years. Participation was higher among females and those from Catholic schools and was lower among those who were of lower sccioeconomic status or from an area with high unemployment. Noncompleters successfully completed nearly 60% of modules undertaken, failed to complete 29% successfully, and withdrew from 11%. Failure rates were in diploma-level courses. Pass rates were highest in trade-related and similar courses. Characteristics associated with low failure rates were as follows: having performed well while still in school; being from a higher socioeconomic background; and being from an English-speaking background. The analysis results suggested that noncompleters study a range of courses within the VET sector and that it is important for VET to remain flexible and continue to provide diversity in the range of courses available to young Australians who do not complete year 12 of secondary school. A glossary and nine additional tables are appended. (Contains 22 tables and 12 references.) (MN)

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Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

Research Report Number 20

Participation and Achievement in VET

of Non-completers of School

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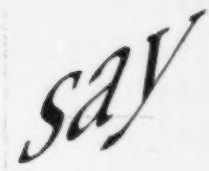

Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

Research Report Number 20

PARTICIPATION AND ACHIEVEMENT IN VET OF NON-COMPLETERS OF SCHOOL

Katrina Ball (*National Centre for Vocational Education Research*)
and
Stephen Lamb (*University of Melbourne*)

This report forms part of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth:
a research program that is jointly managed by ACER and
the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA).

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
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Executive Summary

This report examines the vocational education and training (VET) activities and experiences of non-completers of Year 12 in the initial post-school years. It investigates differences between those who participate in VET after leaving school and those who do not. It also reviews VET achievement examining results in the VET courses undertaken by non-completers.

The report provides information on the characteristics and success rates of non-completers who participated in VET. The report does not attempt to identify factors which influence the progression from Year 9 to post-school destinations (for example, leaving school early and participation in VET). Rather, this study concentrates on describing the characteristics and achievement levels of those non-completers who participated in VET according to their specific study programs.

In the present report, the term 'non-completer' is used to refer to all those who did not complete Year 12, not just those who left school prior to the post-compulsory years. It includes the young people who did not continue at secondary school beyond Year 10 and Year 11 as well as those who left during Year 12 without obtaining a Year 12 certificate.

The group of school non-completers is not homogeneous, as students leave school early for a variety of reasons. The VET sector plays an important role in providing further education and training for the diverse groups of non-completers — those who are re-entering education and training, those undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships, or those continuing their studies in an environment different to school. Focusing on the VET choices and achievements of non-completers will assist a better understanding of the processes of transition to work and the role played by VET in this process.

Data and method

The analyses were based on data from the Y95 cohort of the *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth* (LSAY). This is a national sample of young people who were first surveyed in Year 9 of secondary school in 1995; at that time the majority of sample members were aged 14 years. The cohort has been surveyed annually since 1995. The LSAY surveys provide detailed information on school experiences, educational attainment, and post-school participation in education, training and work. To obtain more detailed information on VET experiences, the information was supplemented with data collected for the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS). The AVETMISS data contain information collected from publicly funded VET programs delivered by training organisations across Australia. The data apply to programs delivered by adult and community education, State TAFE systems and private providers of vocational education. This is the first report in the LSAY series using this information to examine VET participation and achievement.

The information collected from the annual Y95 follow-up survey has been matched with data from the 1996, 1997 and 1998 AVETMISS collections to develop a detailed profile of the vocational education and training experiences of non-completers. LSAY provides information on broad measures of participation in VET, including qualification and field of study. The AVETMISS data contain more detailed information on courses, module enrolments and module achievement. Together the two data sets provide extensive information on the VET experiences of non-completers from the Y95 cohort.

Two main sets of analyses were undertaken. The first set examined the course enrolments of non-completers including enrolments by stream of study, field of study and qualifications.

The second set examined achievement for non-completers by examining success in modules or subjects. The analyses explored the rates of withdrawal and failure from modules in which non-completers enrol, as well as achievement for those who completed. Course and module enrolments covered the period from 1996 to 1998.

The sample of non-completers comprised 2067 respondents, which represented about 21 per cent of the surviving members of the Y95 cohort in 1998.

Main findings

The results show that approximately 37 per cent of non-completers had undertaken some sort of VET study in their initial post-school years. Given a rate of school non-completion of 21 per cent for this cohort in 1998, this implies that only 13 per cent of school students had not completed Year 12 or continued in some form of further study. Participation in VET varied by background. There were clear differences according to gender, ethnicity and locality. Of note were:

- higher participation rates for males than females (42 per cent compared to 30 per cent);
- higher participation for non-completers from Catholic schools (44 per cent compared to 36 per cent from government schools and 31 per cent from independent schools);
- lower participation rates for non-completers from lower socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds (35 per cent for the lowest quartile of SES compared to 43 per cent for the highest quartile); and
- lower participation rates for non-completers living in areas of high unemployment.

Participation also varied by type of VET course:

- over 40 per cent of all non-completers who enrolled in further study entered trade-related courses (preparatory or full trade courses);
- a quarter enrolled in non-trade skills courses;
- male non-completers (57 per cent) were more likely to enrol in a trade-related course, while females (82 per cent) were more likely to enrol in courses that teach other skills; and
- males who leave school after commencing Year 11 were less likely to enrol in a trade-related course compared with males who leave school earlier (51 per cent compared to 64 per cent).

Not all non-completers are successful in their vocational education and training studies. In looking at achievement measured in terms of module outcomes:

- almost 60 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers in the sample resulted in a successful outcome, while 29 per cent of modules were not successfully completed. Non-completers withdrew from a further 11 per cent of modules;
- failure rates varied depending on the type of qualification, with the highest failure rates in the advanced courses — diploma-level courses; and
- pass rates were highest in trade-related and similar level courses.

Module outcomes also varied across different categories of non-completers:

- failure rates were lowest in modules undertaken more often by students who performed well at school compared to those who did not perform well at school (14 per cent for those in the highest quartile of school achievement compared to 17 per cent for those in the lowest quartile);
- failure rates were lowest in modules undertaken more often by high SES rather than low SES non-completers (13 per cent compared to 19 per cent);
- successful completion rates were 63 per cent for high SES non-completers compared with 59 per cent for low SES non-completers — the differences in success rates are small, in the light of the differences in school success rates of the two groups; and
- failure rates were lower in modules undertaken by non-completers from English-speaking rather than non-English-speaking backgrounds (16 per cent compared to 22 per cent).

The results of this analysis suggest that non-completers study a range of courses within the VET sector. It is important that VET remains flexible and continues to provide diversity in the range of courses available to this group of teenagers. The data used in this report covered the period up to 1998, and by that time it was not possible to assess if all courses studied by non-completers lead on to secure employment outcomes; nor was it possible to test whether some courses provide superior employment outcomes. These longer-term effects will form part of the LSAY program over the next few years as the Y95 cohort ages.

1

Introduction

An important goal in government policy over recent years has been to improve the transition from school to working life for young Australians. There has been particular concern over the group of young people who fail to complete school. For those who do not proceed to or re-enter education and training, there are long-term costs. In 1999, the Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NACSEM) estimated the lifetime direct and indirect costs of school non-completion to be $74000 per individual (King, 1999). They estimated that about 35000 students each year do not complete school and will not participate in further formal education or training.

It is widely recognised that non-completers experience particular difficulty in making the transition from school to productive activities in adulthood such as participation in post-school education, training and employment. A key policy response has been to strengthen the range of education and training options available to non-completers, particularly through the expansion of vocational education and training, and to increase the incentives to participate through changes to income-support arrangements for those in education and training and for those out of work. But how many non-completers take part in further education and training? What VET modules and courses do they undertake? How well do they achieve?

This report documents the range of courses being studied by school non-completers in the VET sector and the differences in achievement according to a range of demographic factors. The NACSEM study identifies that, without further education and training, school non-completers are entering the labour market with insufficient education and skills to be successful in the long term. Focusing on the VET choices and progress of non-completers will assist in a better understanding of the role that VET plays in providing education and training for non-completers of school.

The report does not attempt to identify factors which influence the progression from Year 9 to post-school destinations (for example, leaving school early and participation in VET). Rather, this study concentrates on describing the characteristics and achievement levels of those non-completers who participated in VET according to their specific study programs.

Definition of non-completers

In the current study, the term 'non-completer' is used to refer to those who do not finish Year 12, even if they have continued beyond the compulsory years. The term non-completer is used rather than the more common term 'early school leaver' because government reports and research studies have begun to adopt a quite specific definition of the term 'early school leaver', restricting it to young people under the school leaving age, or 'those young people who leave school either before or on completion of Year 10' (Lamb, Dwyer & Wynn, 2000). Appendix 1 details the definition used in this report.

Aims and scope of this report

This report examines the VET activities, progress and achievement of non-completers in the initial years beyond high school (roughly to age 19). It begins by examining the background characteristics of those who leave school before completing Year 12, and then compares the post-school education and training experiences of different groups of non-completers. It examines the qualification, course and module enrolments of non-completers as well as the rates of module completion and achievement.

The study is focussed on the education and training experiences of school non-completers and the role played by the VET sector in assisting non-completers to continue in education and training. The labour market participation and experiences of this group are outside the scope of this study and are to be examined in subsequent reports in the LSAY series.

In addition, the report does not compare the VET participation and achievement of non-completers with Year 12 completers in the longitudinal survey cohort. While this would be a valuable exercise, it is still too early in the transition experiences of the Year 12 completers to make meaningful comparisons.

This report is restricted to the examination of vocational education and training issues that can be addressed through the LSAY and AVETMISS data sets. Further research is required to identify the reasons why non-completers enrol in some courses and not in others, and the reasons why some groups of non-completers fail or withdraw from particular courses.

Where practicable, issues relating to certain sub-groups of non-completers are addressed. In some instances, for example in disaggregated analyses of course participation and achievement involving Indigenous Australians, this has not been possible because of small numbers.

Previous research

There has been a lot of research dealing with the issue of non-completion. It is not intended here to provide a comprehensive review of this work. For such a review, see, for example, Dwyer (1996) and Lamb, Dwyer and Wyn (2000). Of the work pertinent to the current study, consistent in the findings is the pattern that non-completion involves young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, studies of non-completers have reported that non-completers are predominantly from low SES backgrounds and from rural and remote areas of Australia (Dwyer, 1996; Teese, McLean & Polesel, 1992; Lamb, 1994; Marks & Fleming, 1999; Lamb et al. 2000; Marks et al. 2000). They are also more often males than females, from government rather than private schools, and with higher rates among Indigenous than non-Indigenous students.

A number of studies looking at the benefits of staying on at school report that individuals relate the benefits of education to the occupational opportunities available. Haskel and Holt (1999) report that the occupational choices of potential employees who have not as yet entered the labour market are an indicator of perceived labour market opportunities. Work undertaken by the Bureau of Rural Sciences (1999) shows there is considerable variation in school attendance by 16-year-olds across rural Australia, with below-average school attendance in inland regions compared to coastal regions. The areas of low school attendance tend to be regions that experienced declines in employment levels between the 1991 census and the 1996 census. Returns to education in rural and remote Australia are considerably less than in metropolitan areas and, within regional Australia, returns to education are considerably less in inland regions than in coastal regions and metropolitan centres.

Other work suggests that students leave school early for a variety of reasons. Dwyer (1996) suggests that non-completers have diverse backgrounds and the various groups of non-completers leave school for different reasons. He has classified non-completers into six categories according to the different reasons for leaving and different education and training needs. The six categories are classified as:

- *positive leavers* who leave school to follow a specific career path such as an apprenticeship or employment
- *opportune leavers* who take up a job or opportunity that presents itself before completing school

- *would-be leavers* or reluctant stayers who plan to leave school as soon as an opportunity presents
- *circumstantial leavers* who leave school for non-educational reasons such as low family income or other family needs
- *discouraged leavers* who leave school because they are not succeeding at school and have low levels of performance and interest
- *alienated leavers* whose needs are difficult to meet at school and for whom positive post-school experiences are crucial.

Given the diversity of educational backgrounds and reasons for leaving school, the different groups or categories of non-completers have varying further education and training needs. Non-completers who leave school intentionally with the purpose of taking up apprenticeships or traineeships or enrolling in specific occupationally oriented vocational courses could be classified as 'positive' or 'opportune' leavers. 'Discouraged' leavers and 'circumstantial' leavers may be those who have experienced years of scholastic failure at school. Non-completers who enrol in courses in the VET sector within a few years of leaving school could belong to any of the six categories of non-completer.

The diversity in categories of non-completers makes it important to examine school attainment and associated differences in course choice and achievement in order to assess how the VET system caters for the different needs of non-completers.

Other research has shown that VET is an important option for those school non-completers who wish to re-enter education and training. Courses offered in the VET sector by TAFE or by private providers offer alternative education and training pathways to remaining on at school for a number of students. However, for those who leave in the hope of finding a job, or simply to escape school, some take up apprenticeships or similar training, while others go directly from school into paid employment but later return to study. For both of these groups the VET 'pathway' is the most important post-compulsory education option. For other non-completers, however, VET plays no role in their move from school to work or other activities.

Previous work shows that apprenticeships are particularly important for non-completers, mainly males. Roughly one-third of male non-completers by age 19 in the mid-1990s had obtained an apprenticeship (Lamb, Dwyer & Wynn, 2000; Lamb, Long & Malley, 1998). Furthermore, recent changes introduced through the New Apprenticeships scheme have increased rates of participation in traineeships as well. Non-completers also undertake TAFE certificate courses, although few take up TAFE diplomas. In the mid-1990s, roughly one-quarter of male and female non-completers entered a TAFE certificate or diploma course, with the majority enrolled in certificate courses — 88 per cent of males and 80 per cent of females enrolled in TAFE certificate courses (Lamb, Long & Malley, 1998).

Despite this work, little detail is known about progress and achievement in VET for non-completers, or about participation. What percentage of non-completers complete modules? Do they complete them successfully? Does this vary by choice of course or by qualification level? Does school attainment influence course choice or achievement? To date, these sorts of issues in assessments of the role of VET in bridging the gap between school and work for non-completers have not been adequately addressed.

Data and methods

The analyses for this report are based on the non-completers identified in the 1995 (Y95) cohort of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY). This data set has tracked a national cohort of Year 9 students annually from 1995 and has mapped school experiences, educational attainment, and post-school participation in education, training and work. For the

present study, the information collected from LSAY respondents on participation in VET has been supplemented with data from the national VET provider data collected under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). The national VET provider data collection contains information collected from VET programs delivered by training organisations across Australia. The data apply to programs delivered by adult and community education, State TAFE systems and private providers of vocational education.

The information collected from the annual Y95 follow-up survey has been matched with data from the 1996, 1997 and 1998 national VET provider data collections to develop a detailed profile of the vocational education and training experiences of non-completers. LSAY provides information on broad measures of participation in VET, including qualification and field of study. The national VET provider data collections contain more detailed information on courses, module enrolments and module achievement. Together the two data sets provide extensive information on the VET experiences of non-completers from the Y95 cohort.

Three sets of analyses were undertaken. The first set examined the profiles of non-completers based on gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, rural or urban place of residence, and type of school attended. The second set examined the course enrolments of non-completers, including enrolments by stream of study, field of study and qualifications. The third set examined module enrolments, achievement and completion for non-completers. The analyses explored the rates of withdrawal from modules in which non-completers enrol, as well as achievement for those who completed. Course and module enrolments covered the period from 1996 to 1998.

Information on sample sizes including the numbers of non-completers is presented in Table 1. Approximately 21 per cent of the Y95 cohort left school before completing Year 12.

Table 1 The sample size

	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non-completers	1206	26	861	17	2067	21
Year 12 completers	3468	74	4203	83	7671	79
Total	4674	100	5064	100	9738	100

Appendix 1 details the definition of non-completion used in this study.

Organisation of the report

Chapter 2, which follows, presents broad-level information on the groups of non-completers. It provides, briefly, material on non-completion, offering a comparison of non-completers and school completers with a breakdown by socioeconomic status, gender, school type, ethnicity, early school achievement, and region. It then gives an overview of the rates of participation in VET with a comparison by background.

In Chapter 3 the focus is on the different types of VET programs. The rates of participation in different VET programs are examined. Chapter 4 turns to the factors influencing VET program choices. It investigates the differences in the types of VET programs of non-completers according to a range of background measures.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis of achievement in VET. Data requirements dictate that the unit of analysis for achievement is the module, or subject. Of interest are the factors which are linked to differences in module completion.

Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the major findings and gives some consideration to the nature of the role of VET in the further education and training experiences of non-completers.

2

Non-completers and Participation in VET

Vocational education and training provides an alternative educational pathway for teenagers who do not complete Year 12. VET offers a broad range of courses for non-completers from enabling courses that teach literacy, numeracy and basic employment skills to Certificate level and Diploma level courses. These courses allow students to gain trade specific qualifications and lead on to further education and training including university programs. Although it is difficult to make any judgement about the comparability of these courses with Year 12 equivalent qualifications it is clear that participation in VET provides students with an alternative pathway to further qualifications.

Not all non-completers choose to, or are able to, access post-school VET immediately after they leave school. This chapter examines the numbers of non-completers from the Y95 cohort who participated in VET during their initial post-school years. It compares the background characteristics of the non-completers who participated in VET with the backgrounds of the non-completers who did not participate in VET.

Who doesn't complete school?

Before examining the patterns of VET participation, it is worth providing a brief profile of the Y95 non-completers. Table 2 presents the rates of non-completion according to a range of background characteristics. Table A1 (Appendix 2) presents the background characteristics of completers and non-completers.

By 1998 about one-fifth of the Y95 cohort had left school before completing Year 12. The rate was higher among boys than among girls with one in four boys not completing school compared with one in six girls. This meant that boys made up 58 per cent of the group of non-completers.

Non-completion rates varied considerably by achievement at school. Based on achievement tests (literacy and numeracy) taken during Year 9, almost 70 per cent of those who did not complete school were the lower achievers (comprising lowest and lower-middle quartiles of achievement in Table 2). The highest rate of non-completion was among the lowest achievers — those in the bottom quartile of Year 9 achievement. The rate was 39 per cent, almost four times that for those from the highest quartile of achievement. The figures in Table 2 also show that not all of the non-completers were low achievers — one in every ten non-completers was from the top quartile of achievement.

School type was also related to non-completion. The rate of non-completion for students in government schools was 26 per cent. This was more than double the rate for students in Catholic schools — 12 per cent — and those in independent schools — 11 per cent.

Young people from a non-English-speaking background were less likely to not complete school than young people whose parents were born in Australia or in another English-speaking country. Of those whose parents were born in a non-English-speaking country only 10 per cent did not complete school, compared to around 22 per cent for those whose parents were either born in Australia or in another English-speaking country.

Young people from Indigenous backgrounds had much higher rates of non-completion than children from non-Indigenous backgrounds. One in every two children from Indigenous backgrounds did not complete Year 12 compared with one in every five children who were non-Indigenous.

Table 2 Non-completers from the Y95 cohort, by selected characteristics

Characteristic	Non-completers %	Year 12 completers %	Total %
Gender			
Males	26	74	100
Females	17	83	100
Early school achievement			
Lowest	41	59	100
Lower middle	26	74	100
Upper middle	15	85	100
Highest	10	90	100
School type			
Government	26	74	100
Catholic	12	88	100
Independent non-Catholic	11	89	100
Ethnicity[+++]			
Australian-born	22	78	100
Other-English-speaking	23	77	100
Non-English-speaking	11	89	100
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	49	51	100
Non-Indigenous	20	80	100
Geographic locality			
Urban	16	84	100
Regional	26	74	100
Rural or remote	29	71	100
Socioeconomic status			
Lowest	28	72	100
Lower middle	23	77	100
Upper middle	17	83	100
Highest	13	87	100
Parents' education			
Lowest (Did not complete school)	36	64	100
Lower middle (School certificate)	25	75	100
Upper middle (Post-school qual.)	23	77	100
Highest (University degree)	10	90	100

[+++] Ethnicity is based on parents' country of birth (see Glossary in Appendix 1).

There are regional differences that impact on non-completion. Young people who live in urban areas are more likely to remain at school than those who live in regional centres (defined as centres with populations between 10,000 and 100,000 people) or in rural and remote regions. Of those living in rural or remote areas of Australia, 29 per cent did not complete Year 12. This rate was almost double that for young people living in urban areas (16 per cent). The rate for those living in regional centres was 26 per cent.

Social background is also an influence on non-completion. Non-completers tend to come more often from lower socioeconomic status (SES) families. More than a third of non-completers came from families in the lowest quartile of SES, whereas about a sixth of non-completers came from high SES families (see Table A1 in the Appendix). Table 2 indicates that the rate of non-completion for young people from low SES families (in the lowest quartile of SES) was 28 per cent, more than double the rate (13 per cent) for those from high SES families (those in the highest quartile).

Parents' level of education is another factor that distinguishes non-completers and school completers. In general, the education level of the parents of young people who did not complete was lower than that of those who completed Year 12. For those whose parents had themselves left school early, 36 per cent did not complete Year 12. This was more than three times the rate for those whose parents were university- educated (10 per cent).

Non-completers and participation in VET

Clearly, non-completion of school is influenced by a range of social, gender, education, region, and school factors. Do these and other factors also influence the participation of non-completers in post-school VET? This question will be addressed in the following section. Before doing so, it is worthwhile looking at how many non-completers participated in VET during their initial post-school years.

Overall rates of participation

By the end of 1998, 37 per cent of non-completers had participated in some form of VET. This meant that during the period they would otherwise have been at school, roughly two out of every five non-completers participated in alternative forms of education and training.

Participation among different groups of non-completers

Table 3 presents the rates of participation in VET by different background characteristics. It shows that there are gender differences in VET participation among non-completers. About 42 per cent of boys who were non-completers had participated in VET at some time in the three years between 1996 and 1998, compared with only 30 per cent of girls. Therefore, while relatively more girls than boys remained at school, more boys than girls participated in VET at this time. The higher rate of participation among males and the higher school non-completion rate meant that two-thirds of the VET participants were male (see Table A2 in the Appendix).

There was a small tendency for non-completers who were high achievers at school to participate in some form of VET. However, the differences in participation across achievement groups are slight. About 39 per cent of non-completers from the highest quartile of achievement participated in VET, compared with 36 per cent of those from the lowest quartile of achievement. Because of the differences in rates of non-completion, the lowest school achievers (those in the lowest quartile of literacy and numeracy achievement in Year 9) made up 37 per cent of the non-completer participants in VET compared to only 14 per cent of high achievers (see Table A2 in the Appendix).

Relatively fewer students in private schools are non-completers compared to students from government schools. Among those who are, the highest rate of participation in VET was for those from Catholic schools. The rate — 44 per cent — was 8 points higher than for those from government schools and 13 points higher than for young people from independent non-Catholic schools. This means that much higher percentages of young people in Catholic schools are participating in some form of education or training during the post-compulsory years, either in school or in further education and training.

Non-completers were more likely to enrol in a VET course if their parents had been born in Australia rather than in another English-speaking country or in a non-English-speaking country. Again the differences are not great. Some 39 per cent of all non-completers with Australian-born parents enrolled in a VET course. By comparison, 35 per cent of non-completers with parents born in non-English-speaking backgrounds entered a VET course and 30 per cent of non-completers with parents born in other English-speaking countries entered a VET course.

Proportionately fewer non-completers from Indigenous backgrounds enrolled in a VET course compared to other Australians. About 28 per cent of Indigenous non-completers enrolled in a VET course. By comparison, 38 per cent of non-Indigenous non-completers enrolled in VET.

While rural students may complete school less often than their urban counterparts, they are more likely to enrol in VET. The rate of participation in VET among rural and remote non-completers was 44 per cent, compared to 35 per cent for those in regional and urban centres. The higher rate of participation in rural and remote Australia meant that non-completers from these regions made up about one-third of those who participated in VET even though they comprised only 27 per cent of non-completers. The results suggest that living in a rural area is not an impediment to participation in VET. These results are consistent with the VET participation rates of people from rural and remote areas reported in the 1999 *Annual National Report of the Vocational Education and Training System* (ANTA, 2000). The report notes that people from rural and remote areas participate in VET at higher levels than their representation in the population.

Variations in VET participation were also linked to social background. Despite much lower rates of non-completion, those from high SES backgrounds (in the highest quartile of SES) more often entered some form of further education and training in the initial post-school years. The rate — 43 per cent — was 8 percentage points higher than for non-completers from low SES backgrounds (the lowest quartile of SES). The rate was also higher than for the middle SES groups. Despite the higher rate of participation amongst non-completers of high socioeconomic status, those from the lowest quartile of SES comprised 37 per cent of the population of non-completers who participated in a VET course.

Other factors influencing the VET participation of non-completers

The impact of several other indicators on the participation of non-completers in vocational education and training has been examined. These indicators include:

- the distance to be travelled to the nearest TAFE Institute (details are presented in Table 3 and Table A2 in the Appendix)
- median income of the locality in which the non-completers lived (details are presented in Table 3 and Table A2 in the Appendix), and
- the unemployment rate experienced in the locality of residence (details are presented in Table 3 and Table A2 in the Appendix).

The residential postcode was used to derive the distance measures using NCVER data, and the postcode was matched to ABS 1996 census data to obtain regional estimates of median income and mean unemployment rates.

Distance to the nearest training provider is not a factor that differentiates the group of non-completers who participated in VET from those who did not. In general, non-completers who enrolled in a VET course were not living in closer proximity to a training provider than non-completers who did not enrol in a VET course. Two-thirds of non-completers living within 2 kilometres of a TAFE institute did not enrol in a VET course (see Table A2 in the Appendix). About 36 per cent of non-completers who did not enrol in a VET course live within 2 kilometres of a TAFE institute compared to 29 per cent of non-completers who enrolled in a VET course. Almost 20 per cent of both groups of non-completers were living more than 10 kilometres from a TAFE institute.

Table 3 Participation in VET of non-completers, by selected background characteristics

Characteristic	Did not participate in VET %	Participated in VET %	Total %
Gender			
Males	58	42	100
Females	70	30	100
Early school achievement			
Lowest	64	36	100
Lower middle	63	37	100
Upper middle	62	39	100
Highest	61	39	100
School type			
Government	64	36	100
Catholic	56	44	100
Independent non-Catholic	69	31	100
Ethnicity+++			
Australian-born	61	39	100
Other-English	70	30	100
Non-English-speaking	65	35	100
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	72	28	100
Non-Indigenous	62	38	100
Geographic location			
Urban	65	35	100
Regional	65	35	100
Rural or remote	56	44	100
Socioeconomic status			
Lowest	65	35	100
Lower middle	62	38	100
Upper middle	60	40	100
Highest	57	43	100
Parents' education			
Lowest	69	31	100
Lower middle	64	36	100
Upper middle	58	42	100
Highest	66	34	100
Median household income*			
$399.50	58	42	100
$599.50	62	38	100
$849.50	66	34	100
$1249.50	48	52	100
Proximity to a TAFE institute			
Less than 2 kms	67	33	100
Between 2 and 10 kms	59	41	100
Over 10 kms	59	41	100
Unemployment rate of residential locality			
Less than 6 per cent	58	42	100
Between 6 and 10 per cent	63	37	100
Between 10 and 14 per cent	58	42	100
Over 14 per cent	66	33	100

+++ Ethnicity is based on parents' country of birth (see Glossary in Appendix 1).

* Median household income of $799.50 has been excluded because of small numbers in this cell.

There were small differences in the regional median household income between the two groups of non-completers (see Table 3). The highest rate of participation was from non-completers who lived in areas with the highest median income, although this group comprised less than 5 per cent of the sample. The rate was 52 per cent, 10 points higher than for any other income group. However, those living in areas with the lowest median income recorded the second highest level of participation. Over a quarter of all non-completers who enrolled in VET lived in localities where the median household income, as measured at the 1996 census, was less than $400 a week, and 69 per cent lived in localities where the median income was less than $600 a week (see Table A2 in the Appendix).

Non-completers from areas of high unemployment were less likely to participate in vocational education and training than their counterparts. The distribution of non-completers who participated in VET by the unemployment rate of their locality is presented in Table 3.

Two-thirds of non-completers living in localities with an unemployment rate of over 14 per cent were not participating in VET. About 17 per cent of non-completers who had not accessed vocational education and training lived in localities with relatively high rates of unemployment, compared with 13 per cent of those who participated in the sector (see Table A2 in the Appendix). These findings are consistent with previous research outlined in the introduction that has identified that an individual, typically, relates the benefits of education to the occupational opportunities available. Alternatively, the high proportion of non-completers living in areas of high unemployment and not participating in vocational education and training may be because there are fewer opportunities available for an apprenticeship in areas of high unemployment.

3

VET Courses entered by Non-completers

Overall rates of VET participation provide some insight into the role of further education and training in the transition experiences of non-completers. However, VET programs vary enormously in terms of duration, type of course, and training provider. It is important in looking at the role of VET to consider the nature of programs that non-completers enter. What types of VET do non-completers undertake? Are there differences in the courses chosen by the diverse groups of non-completers?

This chapter examines the type of education and training undertaken by non-completers, the choice of training provider and the length of course. Information on participation is presented separately for males and females and according to whether the student left school before or after the commencement of the post-compulsory years. The types of courses undertaken by non-completers are examined in terms of the stream of study, a classification that indicates the type and level of the course, and field of study, a classification that describes the primary subject matter of the course. Participation is also measured in terms of level of qualification, length of course and type of provider.

Stream of study

Table 4 presents information on the stream of study for the non-completers who participated in some form of VET between 1996 and 1998. The streams of study include preparatory as well as complete courses, for example, preparatory trade courses and complete trade courses. Preparatory courses are those which can lead to full courses and successful participation provides some exemptions to the full course.

The results show that the majority of non-completers who enrolled in VET were enrolled in trade-related courses. About 12 per cent were doing a preparatory trade course, while 31 per cent were enrolled in a full trade stream. A further 24 per cent were enrolled in non-trade certificate courses, with one-third of this group in preparatory or qualifying certificate courses.

There were gender differences in the enrolments across streams of study. Male and female non-completers enrolled in quite different types of courses. About 57 per cent of males enrolled in a trade-related course — either a preparatory course which grants partial exemption to a recognised trade course or a complete trade course. By comparison, only 18 per cent of females were enrolled in trade-related courses.

Females were more likely to enrol in courses which teach other skills. About 42 per cent of females had enrolled in either a preparatory course which grants partial exemption to non-trade skills courses, or in a recognised complete course teaching non-trade skills. The equivalent rate for males was 15 per cent.

About one in ten males and one in ten females who participated in VET enrolled in courses that teach either 'basic education and employment skills' or 'education preparation'. For the teenagers undertaking these courses, males tended to favour the courses providing basic education and employment skills while females favoured the courses in education preparation.

Table 4 Stream of study enrolments, by gender and school attainment (%)

Stream of study	All students	Males	Females	Year 10 or less		Year 11 or more	
				Males	Females	Males	Females
Recreation, leisure & personal enrichment	0.8	0.4	1.5	0.9	0.9	0.0	0.9
Basic education & employment skills	5.0	5.9	3.1	4.3	2.5	7.8	2.7
Education preparation	5.4	4.8	6.5	5.6	9.3	4.1	3.5
Initial vocational courses: operative	14.5	11.3	20.8	11.5	23.7	9.6	21.2
Recognised trade: preparatory	12.2	16.0	4.6	14.1	4.2	17.0	6.2
Recognised trade: complete	31.4	40.8	13.1	49.2	13.6	35.3	15.0
Other skills: preparatory	8.0	5.5	12.7	1.7	7.6	9.2	13.3
Other skills: complete	16.3	9.7	29.2	8.1	27.1	11.5	31.0
Trade technician / trade supervisory	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.0	5.9	4.6	1.8
Para-professional &professional/ technician, higher technician	2.1	0.8	3.8	0.9	4.3	0.5	4.4
Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.5	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

There are differences in the courses in which males and females enrol, depending upon whether they leave school before, or after, the start of Year 11. Males who left school in Year 10 or below more often enrolled in a trade-related course than males who left school in Year 11. About half of all males who left school in Year 10 or below enrolled in a complete trade course compared with a third of those who left school in Year 11. There was no difference in the proportion of males who enrolled in a course which grants partial exemption to a trades course, with one in seven of all males enrolling in these courses irrespective of whether they left school before, or after, the start of Year 11.

Males were more likely to enrol in a 'complete non-trade skills' course if they left school in Year 11 compared with those who left school in Year 10 or below. Males who left school in Year 11 were twice as likely to enrol in a course in 'basic education and employment skills' compared with males who left in Year 10 or below. One in 12 males who left in Year 11 enrolled in these courses.

The main difference in course enrolments for females who left school in Year 10 or below and females who left after this time is in 'education preparation' course enrolments. Almost three times as many females who left school in Year 10 or below were likely to have enrolled in these courses. One in ten females who left school in Year 10 or below enrolled in an 'education preparation' course.

Field of study

There are clear differences in the field of study for males and females. Table 5 shows that the most popular choice of field of study for males was engineering or surveying, with almost 40 per cent of all males enrolled in this field. For males, this choice was twice as popular as architecture and building. About one in eight males had enrolled in 'services, hospitality and transportation' courses. This contrasted with female enrolments. Over a third of all female non-completers had enrolled in a 'services, hospitality or transportation' course. 'Business, administration and economics' courses were also popular with females as almost 30 per cent enrolled in these subjects.

Table 5 Field of study enrolments, by gender and school attainment (%)

Field of study (2-digit level of classification)	All students	Males	Females	Year 10 or less		Year 11 or more	
				Males	Females	Males	Females
Land resources, animal husbandry	5.4	6.8	2.7	8.1	5.1	5.5	0.0
Architecture, building	14.6	21.8	0.8	27.8	0.0	17.9	1.8
Arts, humanities and social sciences	2.1	2.0	2.3	1.3	2.6	1.8	2.7
Business, administration, economics	12.9	4.4	29.6	1.7	25.4	6.9	36.3
Education	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0
Engineering, surveying	25.9	38.0	2.3	35.5	4.2	39.0	0.9
Health, community services	5.1	0.8	13.4	1.3	15.3	0.5	11.5
Law, legal studies	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0
Science	2.4	3.0	1.1	3.9	0.0	2.3	1.8
Veterinary science, animal care	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Services, hospitality, transportation	20.7	12.9	35.7	11.1	33.1	14.2	37.1
TAFE multi-field education	10.3	9.9	11.1	9.4	13.6	11.5	7.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Specific courses (identified at the more disaggregated six-digit level of field of study) chosen by at least 5 per cent of males included carpentry and joinery (7 per cent), general engineering and related technologies (6 per cent), electrical engineering and technologies (6 per cent), mechanical engineering technologies and fabrication (7 per cent), automotive engineering and technologies (14 per cent) and general cookery (5 per cent).

Specific courses (identified at the more disaggregated six-digit level of field of study) chosen by at least 5 per cent of females included 'general business administration and management' (5 per cent), 'secretarial, word processing and clerical' (18 per cent), 'childcare', 'residential client care and care for the disabled' (7 per cent), 'hotel, hospitality and tourism' (6 per cent), 'hairdressing and cosmetology' (16 per cent) and 'general secondary education and qualifying education' (5 per cent).

Males who left school in Year 10 or below were more likely to study architecture and building subjects than those who left school in Year 11. Conversely, males who left school in Year 11 were more likely to study business, administration and economics subjects.

Females who left school in Year 10 or below were more likely to enrol in land and marine resources and animal husbandry courses than females who left in Year 11. On the other hand, females who left school in Year 11 were more likely to enrol in business, administration and economics subjects compared with females who left school in Year 10 or below.

Qualification

The distribution of the level of qualifications studied by non-completers in the sample who enrolled in a vocational education and training course at some time during the period 1996 to 1998 is provided in Table 6. Apprenticeships and traineeships are now combined under the one banner of New Apprenticeships. Generally speaking, traditional apprenticeships tend to be at AQF level III or higher (and of more than two years' duration), while traineeships are at AQF level II or lower (and of two years or less duration).

Over a quarter of both males and females enrolled in a qualification at level AQF III or higher. About two-thirds of courses that were being studied for this qualification category

were 'complete trades courses'. 'Other skills courses' accounted for a further 22 per cent of courses studied in this qualification category.

About a quarter of females enrolled in a certificate level II course, while 15 per cent of males enrolled in this level of qualification. Almost a third of courses that were being studied for this qualification were 'complete other skills courses', while 'initial vocational' courses and 'courses which grant partial exemption to recognised trades courses' each accounted for about a quarter of the courses being studied at this qualification category.

A further 15 per cent of males enrolled in a trade certificate qualification. By contrast, only 2 per cent of females had enrolled in this level of qualification.

There is no discernible difference in the distribution of qualifications taken by males who left school in Year 10 or below and males who left school in Year 11. However, there are differences in the level of qualification studied by females who left school in Year 10 or below compared with females who left in Year 11. About one in six females who left school in Year 10 or below enrolled in a 'certificate not elsewhere classified' compared with only one in ten females who left in Year 11. The courses that were being studied for this qualification category were primarily courses in 'education preparation', 'initial vocational courses', 'courses which grant partial exemption to other skills courses', and 'complete other skills courses'.

Choice of provider

There are three main providers of VET in Australia: TAFE, community providers, and private providers. TAFE was the choice of provider for 95 per cent of the sample of non-completers who enrolled in a VET course between 1996 and 1998. This means that community and private providers account for only a small number of courses involving non-completers.

Table 6 Qualification enrolments, by gender and school attainment (%)

				Year 10 or less		Year 11 or more	
Qualification category*	All students	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Certificate – not elsewhere classified	11.9	11.5	12.7	12.4	17.0	11.5	9.7
Endorsements to certificate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Statement of attainment	8.9	8.7	9.2	9.4	6.8	8.3	11.5
Certificate of competency	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0
AQF – Senior Secondary	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.9
AQF – Certificate I	6.5	7.5	4.6	6.0	4.2	9.6	5.3
AQF – Certificate II	18.6	15.5	24.6	13.3	22.0	13.8	25.7
AQF – Certificate III	25.9	25.0	27.7	29.5	30.5	22.0	27.4
Certificate – trade	10.7	15.1	2.3	16.2	0.9	15.6	4.4
AQF – Certificate IV	3.5	3.4	3.9	2.1	6.8	3.7	1.8
Advanced certificate – post-trade	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Advanced certificate – other	1.3	0.8	2.3	0.9	4.2	0.5	0.0
AQF – Diploma	1.1	0.6	1.9	1.3	0.9	0.0	3.5
Diploma	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.9	0.5	0.0
AQF – Advanced Diploma	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	3.4	4.2	1.9	4.3	0.9	4.1	2.7
Not applicable	7.3	6.9	8.1	3.9	5.1	9.6	7.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* The qualification levels identified under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) are detailed in the Glossary in Appendix 1.

Students who studied with a community provider were studying recreational or personal enrichment courses or courses in 'basic education and employment skills', 'initial vocational courses or 'complete other skills courses'. These courses were in the subject areas of 'business administration and economics', 'health and community services', 'services, hospitality and transportation' and 'TAFE multi-field education', which is the field of study classification for subjects that teach basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Non-completers who studied with a private provider were primarily enrolled in 'complete other skills' and 'initial vocational' courses. However, some students studied 'trades courses', 'para-professional and technical' and 'trade technician' courses with a private provider. The courses taken by this group of students with private providers were mainly in the subject areas of 'business, administration and economics', 'engineering and surveying', 'services, hospitality and transportation' and 'architecture and building'.

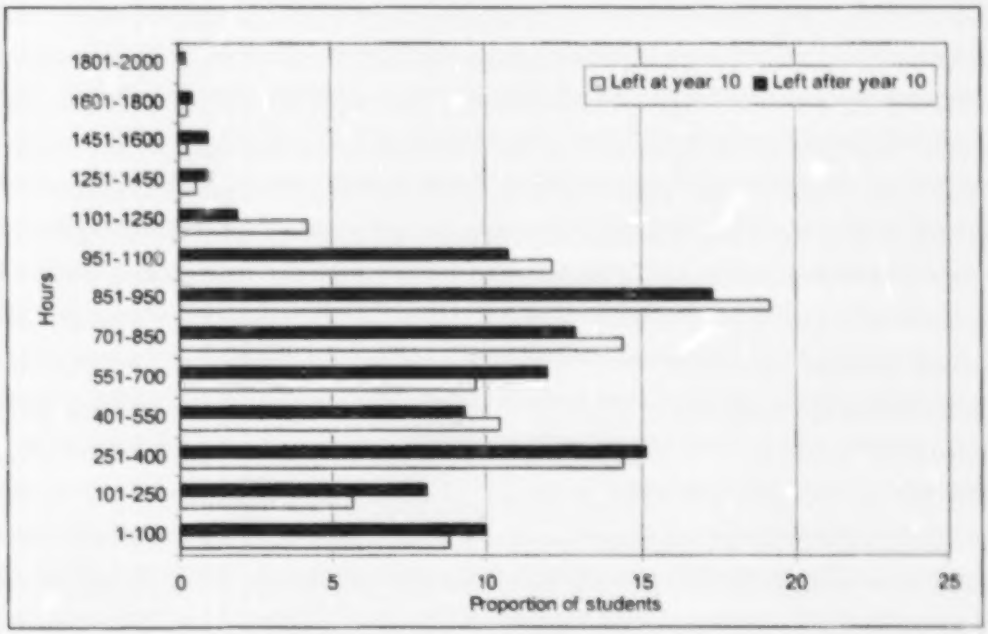
Length of course

Half of all courses studied by non-completers who enrolled in VET between 1996 and 1998 had course curriculum hours that were more than 700. The distribution of course curriculum hours by level of schooling is illustrated in Figure 1.

Only one in 20 students was enrolled in a course with more than 1100 course curriculum hours. These students were far more often those who had left school in Year 11.

About one in ten students was studying a course with less than 100 course curriculum hours. These short courses were predominantly initial vocational courses. Over three-quarters of the group of students who enrolled in initial vocational courses were taking courses of less than 400 hours' duration.

Figure 1 Distribution of course curriculum hours in VET, by level of schooling



4

Characteristics of Non-completers by Course

What are the characteristics of non-completers in different types of VET courses? This chapter examines the type of education and training undertaken by non-completers and the choice of training provider, according to differences in early school achievement, geographical location, gender, highest year level achieved at secondary school and SES. There are other factors linked to employment and provision which may shape participation, however the focus in this chapter is on supply-side factors.

The results show that there were differences in the VET courses studied by non-completers between 1996 and 1998 according to several background factors which will be examined in turn.

Early school achievement

Some of the variation in course choice amongst non-completers can be attributed to diversity in the reasons for non-completion. Many non-completers who leave school for positive reasons, such as to enter an apprenticeship or follow a specific career path, leave school at the end of Year 10. Such differences between non-completers are captured in this study through school attainment.

There are variations in the courses studied by non-completers who had left school in Year 10 or below and those who left school in Year 11 depending upon their level of school achievement. The distribution of VET course enrolments by early school achievement and school level attained is shown in Table 7.

Over a quarter of students who had left school in Year 10 or below, across the range of quartiles of school achievement, were enrolled in 'complete trades courses'. However, about 40 per cent of students in the lower quartiles of measured school achievement were undertaking these courses compared with 35 per cent and 28 per cent of students in the two upper quartiles. One in five students in the lowest quartile of school achievement was enrolled in initial vocational courses compared with less than one in eight students with higher levels of school achievement. On the other hand, one in five students from the highest quartile of school achievement was enrolled in 'complete other skills courses'. Notably, there was no difference in the proportion of students undertaking courses in 'basic education and employment skills' and 'education preparation' across the range of levels of school achievement.

There was considerable divergence in the courses taken by high school achievers who left school in Year 11 compared with lower-achieving non-completers. By contrast, there was little difference between the courses taken by high achievers who left in Year 10 or below and their lower-achieving contemporaries. Over half the students who were high achievers at school were enrolled in 'complete trades courses', compared with only a quarter of students who had lower levels of school achievement. A further 20 per cent of high achievers were enrolled in 'complete other skills courses'. There were no marked differences in the courses studied by teenagers who left school in Year 11 across the other three quartiles of school achievement.

Table 7 Course enrolments, by early school achievement and school attainment

Stream of study	Quartiles of school achievement							
	Year 10 or less				Year 11 or more			
	1 low	2	3	4 high	1 low	2	3	4 high
Recreation, leisure & personal enrichment	0.7	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Basic education & employment skills	4.2	5.3	0.0	4.4	6.8	4.0	9.2	4.4
Education preparation	6.3	7.4	6.0	8.9	3.4	5.0	6.2	0.0
Initial vocational courses: operative	20.1	10.5	14.9	13.3	14.4	17.8	12.3	4.4
Preparatory trade courses	9.0	12.6	13.4	8.9	13.6	13.9	13.9	10.9
Trade courses	38.9	39.0	35.8	28.9	26.3	22.8	24.6	52.2
Preparatory non-trade courses	4.2	3.2	6.0	0.0	12.7	10.9	12.3	2.2
Non-trade courses	11.8	15.8	13.4	22.2	15.3	20.8	16.9	21.7
Trade technician / trade supervisory	3.5	3.2	7.5	2.2	2.5	4.0	4.6	2.2
Para-professional & professional / technician, higher technician	1.4	0.0	3.0	9.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course	0.0	1.1	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Parents' education

Over one-third of students whose parents were in the lowest quartile of educational attainment were studying 'non-trade skills courses'. Over a quarter were studying 'trade courses'. These patterns were different to those of students whose parents had attained higher levels of education. The distribution of VET course enrolments by parents' level of education is shown in Table 8.

One-third of students with parents with high levels of educational attainment were studying trade courses. Only 17 per cent were studying 'non-trade skills courses'. Compared to others, students with highly educated parents were more often enrolled in 'para-professional', 'education preparation', and preparatory trade courses.

Table 8 Course enrolments, by parents' level of education

Stream of study	Parents' level of education*			
	1 low	2	3	4 high
Recreation, leisure & personal enrichment	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.2
Basic education & employment skills	9.1	5.4	2.8	4.9
Education preparation	0.0	3.9	8.4	6.2
Initial vocational courses: operative	9.1	12.7	13.5	11.1
Preparatory trade courses	9.1	11.7	11.8	14.8
Trade courses	27.3	31.7	35.4	33.3
Preparatory non-trade courses	9.1	9.8	6.7	1.2
Non-trade skills courses	36.4	16.6	15.7	17.3
Trade technician / trade supervisory	0.0	5.9	3.9	3.7
Para-professional & professional / technician, higher technician	0.0	1.0	0.6	5.0
Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Details on the derivation of parents' level of education are provided in the Glossary in Appendix 1.

Table 9 Course enrolments, by socioeconomic status

Stream of study	Socioeconomic status* 1 low %	2 lower middle %	3 upper middle %	4 high %
Recreation, leisure & personal enrichment	1.9	0.5	0.0	0.8
Basic education & employment skills	6.8	3.0	2.8	3.2
Education preparation	4.4	4.0	3.6	9.7
Initial vocational courses: operative	16.5	13.0	12.8	15.3
Preparatory trade courses	13.1	9.5	14.9	8.1
Trade courses	27.7	40.0	31.2	28.2
Preparatory non-trade courses	11.2	5.0	10.6	8.9
Non-trade courses	13.1	19.0	17.7	17.7
Trade technician / trade supervisory	3.4	4.0	3.6	4.0
Para-professional & professional / technician, higher technician	1.5	1.5	2.8	3.2
Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Details on the derivation of socioeconomic status are provided in the Glossary in Appendix 1.

Socioeconomic status

The distribution of VET course enrolments by socioeconomic status is shown in Table 9. At least a quarter of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds were studying complete trades courses.

Proportionately more students from disadvantaged backgrounds were studying 'basic education and employment skills' courses compared with students from families with a higher socioeconomic status. About 7 per cent of students from the lowest quartile of socioeconomic status were studying 'basic education and employment skills' compared with about 3 per cent of students from other socioeconomic backgrounds. Almost one in ten students from the highest quartile of socioeconomic status were studying courses in 'education preparation' compared with one in 25 students from other socioeconomic backgrounds.

Non-English-speaking background

Proportionately more students who were from a non-English-speaking background were studying 'courses which grant partial exemption to recognised trade courses' than students who were born in Australia or in other English-speaking countries. Proportionately fewer students from a non-English-speaking background were studying 'complete other skills courses' compared with students from an English-speaking background. The distribution of VET course enrolments by parents' country of birth is shown in Table 10.

Geographic location

Course availability will be an important factor shaping course enrolment patterns for VET students living in rural and remote localities. Almost 40 per cent of the sample of non-completers in vocational education and training courses who live in urban areas were studying 'complete trades courses'. Less than 30 per cent of students living in regional or rural and remote localities were enrolled in these courses. A higher proportion of students who live in rural and remote localities were enrolled in 'initial vocational courses' or 'other complete skills courses' compared with students from regional or urban areas. The distribution of VET course enrolments by geographic locality is shown in Table 11.

Table 10 Course enrolments, by parents' country of birth (%)

Stream of study	Parents' country of birth*		
	Australia	Other English-speaking country	Non-English-speaking country
Recreation, leisure & personal enrichment	0.7	0.0	0.0
Basic education & employment skills	4.6	2.5	7.7
Education preparation	5.2	7.5	10.3
Initial vocational courses: operative	15.3	7.5	7.7
Courses which grant partial exemption to recognised trade courses	12.0	7.5	20.0
Complete trade courses	32.5	42.5	33.3
Courses which grant partial exemption to other skills courses	7.6	5.0	2.6
Complete other skills courses	16.0	22.5	12.8
Trade technician / trade supervisory	4.0	0.0	5.1
Para-professional & professional / technician, higher technician	1.8	5.0	2.6
Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course – at a skilled level	0.5	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Details on the derivation of parents' country of birth are provided in the Glossary in Appendix 1.

Table 11 Course enrolments, by rural or urban place of residence (%)

Stream of study	Place of residence		
	Urban	Regional	Rural or remote
Recreation, leisure & personal enrichment	1.2	0.5	0.0
Basic education & employment skills	4.6	4.4	5.5
Education preparation	4.6	5.4	6.5
Initial vocational courses: operative	11.5	16.2	17.1
Courses which grant partial exemption to recognised trade courses	13.4	11.8	10.6
Complete trade courses	40.8	27.5	28.6
Courses which grant partial exemption to other skills courses	6.1	9.8	5.5
Complete other skills courses	13.4	16.7	19.4
Trade technician / trade supervisory	1.9	6.4	3.7
Para-professional & professional/ technician, higher technician	2.8	1.0	2.3
Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course	0.0	0.5	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

5

Performance in VET Modules

The outcomes achieved by non-completers who enrolled in a VET module or subject between 1996 and 1998 are discussed in this chapter. The outcomes are examined according to differences in gender, early school achievement, rural or urban location, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status.

The unit of analysis is the module, or subject, rather than the individual. The information has been compiled on each module studied by a non-completer in the sample, rather than on the average outcome achieved by each student. This means that it is possible to provide estimates of the numbers and types of modules non-completers were successful in, but not the numbers of non-completers who were successful. The range of module outcomes identified in the national VET provider collection and included in this study are:

- pass
- no assessment — satisfactory completion of class hours
- fail
- withdrew — failed
- withdrew — without failure
- no assessment — studies not yet completed
- result withheld.

For ease of presentation, these outcomes have been grouped into the categories of successful outcome, non-successful outcome and not yet completed. Details of module outcomes by a range of demographic and social variables are provided in the Appendix.

Courses in VET comprise modules or units of study. Most courses involve multiple modules. However, students need not undertake all modules, but enrol in courses simply to undertake specific modules. Although some non-completers study a number of modules in a given year, a high proportion only attempt one module. The distribution of the number of modules studied by non-completers in each year of study between 1996 and 1998 is shown in Table 12.

The figures show that in 1996, over two-thirds of non-completers were studying only one module. In 1997 and 1998, an increasing number of enrolments of non-completers involved more than one module.

Table 12 Distribution of the number of modules studied, by year of study (%)

	Year		
Number of modules studied	1996 %	1997 %	1998 %
1	68	43	40
2	20	30	27
3	4	9	9
4	4	7	10
5 or more	4	11	14
	100	100	100

Overall rates of success and failure

Figure 2 presents the rates of achievement in VET modules for non-completers between 1996 and 1998. It shows that a successful outcome was achieved in 59 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers, which were either passed (46 per cent) or satisfactorily completed (13 per cent).

One in four modules (29 per cent) did not result in a successful outcome. Approximately 17 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers resulted in outright failure. A further 8 per cent were withdrawn from but with participants being recorded as having failed, and 4 per cent of modules were withdrawn from without a failure recorded.

A further 12 per cent of modules were not completed either because the result was withheld or the studies were continuing.

The module outcomes achieved by all school non-completers in the 15 to 19-year age group who enrolled in a publicly funded VET course during 1999 can be used as a benchmark to compare the results achieved by non-completers with those of school completers. In 1999, about 71 per cent of modules studied by school non-completers in the 15 to 19-year age group recorded a successful outcome; 21 per cent recorded a non-successful outcome and 8 per cent of modules were not completed. By contrast, school completers were more successful in their VET modules. About 79 per cent of modules studied by senior secondary school completers in the 15 to 19-year age group recorded a successful outcome; 13 per cent recorded a non-successful outcome and 8 per cent of modules were not completed. Differences between the aggregate VET results for non-completers and the results of the sample of non-completers reported in this study would reflect variations in demographic factors, the courses studied, the level of qualification and the period of analysis of the study.

Figure 2 Module outcomes for school non-completers (%)

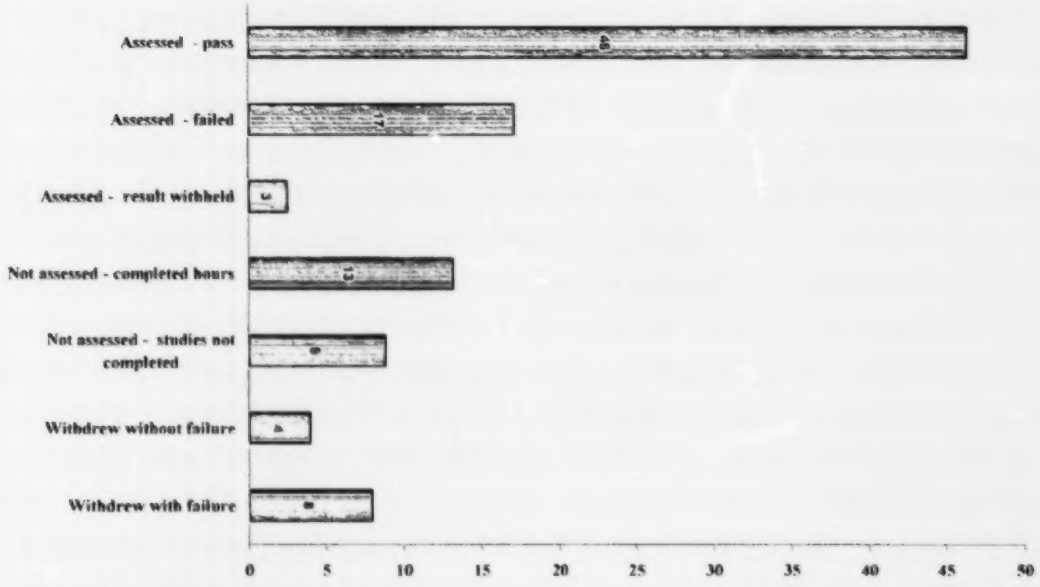


Table 13 Distribution of module outcomes, by type of course

Module outcome	Type of course						
	Personal enrichment %	Basic skills %	Initial vocational %	Trade related %	Other skills related %	Higher level %	Total %
Successful outcome:							
Assessed – pass	38	35	47	53	49	45	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	39	27	10	11	6	8	14
Non-successful outcome:							
Assessed – failed	18	17	14	15	19	16	16
Withdrew with failure	0	11	9	6	8	9	8
Withdrew without failure	0	4	6	3	5	5	4
Not yet completed:							
No assessment – studies not yet completed	0	2	12	11	11	13	9
Assessed – result withheld	5	4	2	1	2	4	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Choice of course and module outcomes

There were differences in module outcomes for non-completers depending upon the type of course studied in VET. The distribution of module outcomes by type of course is provided in Table 13.

With the exception of recreational or personal enrichment courses, the results show that a slightly higher percentage of modules in trade-related courses was successfully completed by non-completers compared with modules in other types of courses. The rate, 64 per cent, was two points higher than for modules in 'other skills' vocational courses, while the pass rate in modules in trade-related courses was four points higher. Non-successful outcomes and withdrawal from modules in trade-related courses was also lower than for other courses.

Qualification category and module outcomes

The level of qualification of a VET course influenced the distribution of module outcomes of non-completers (see Table 14). While only a small percentage of diploma courses were undertaken by non-completers, failure rates were high. The rate of module failure, 29 per cent, was higher than in any other qualification.

Higher pass rates were recorded for non-completers studying courses at AQF level III and IV or equivalent. These courses were more often apprenticeship or trade courses.

The highest pass rate was achieved in modules studied in 'other certificate courses' (71 per cent). These courses most often included short courses providing basic education skills training and initial vocational preparation.

Table 14 Distribution of module outcomes, by level of qualification

Module outcome	Qualification level*							
	Diplomas %	AQF Cert IV and equiv %	AQF Cert III and equiv %	AQF Cert I and II %	Other certificate %	Statement of attainment %	Other including non award %	Total %
Successful outcome:								
Assessed – pass	42	52	53	45	71	44	48	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	12	4	9	13	8	19	20	14
Non-successful outcome:								
Assessed – failed	29	13	15	17	9	14	16	16
Withdrew with failure	2	8	6	8	5	13	5	8
Withdrew without failure	0	3	4	4	3	3	4	4
Not yet completed:								
No assessment – studies not yet completed	14	17	13	10	3	2	6	9
Assessed – result withheld	2	3	1	3	1	4	3	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* The qualification levels identified under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) are detailed in the Glossary in Appendix 1.

School attainment and module outcomes

In the previous chapter it was reported that enrolments in VET varied by school attainment. Despite these differences, students who left school in Year 10 or below and students who left in Year 11, were equally likely to achieve a successful outcome or an unsuccessful outcome in a VET module. However, the distribution of course results differed depending upon whether students left school in Year 10 or below or in Year 11. The figures are presented in Table 15.

Table 15 Distribution of module outcomes, by school attainment

Module outcome	School attainment		
	Year 10 or less %	Year 11 or more %	Total %
Successful outcome:			
Assessed – pass	48	45	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	13	15	14
Non-successful outcome:			
Assessed – failed	16	15	16
Withdrew with failure	7	9	8
Withdrew without failure	4	4	4
Not yet completed:			
No assessment – studies not yet completed	9	10	9
Assessed – result withheld	3	2	2
Total	100	100	100

Table 16 Distribution of module outcomes, by gender

Module outcome	Male %	Female %	Total %
Successful outcome:			
Assessed – pass	47	46	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	15	11	14
Non-successful outcome:			
Assessed – failed	17	14	16
Withdrew with failure	7	11	8
Withdrew without failure	3	6	4
Not yet completed:			
No assessment – studies not yet completed	9	9	9
Assessed – result withheld	2	3	2
Total	100	100	100

These results suggest that VET is providing positive outcomes for a range of different types of school non-completers with different education and training needs. Irrespective of whether non-completers leave school before or after the start or senior secondary school, VET is providing non-completers with positive outcomes from participation in further education and training.

Gender

Overall, male non-completers are more likely than female non-completers to achieve a successful outcome in a VET module. A successful outcome was recorded in 62 per cent of modules studied by male non-completers compared with 57 per cent of modules studied by females. Only 27 per cent of modules studied by male non-completers resulted in a non-successful outcome compared with 31 per cent of modules studied by female non-completers. The distribution of module outcomes by gender is provided in Table 16.

There are also differences between female and male non-completers in the propensity to withdraw from a vocational education and training course. A higher percentage of modules were withdrawn from by females than males. Irrespective of whether or not a 'fail' grade was recorded, females were more likely than males to withdraw from their VET course.

Early school achievement

The distribution of module outcomes for assessed courses according to the quartile of early school achievement is presented in Table 17.

The results show that irrespective of differences in the types of VET modules undertaken by non-completers who were high achievers in school and those who were in the lowest quartile of achievers, the proportion of modules where a successful outcome was achieved was comparable (61 per cent) and pass rates were rather similar (about 47 per cent).

Table 17 Distribution of module outcomes, by quartiles of school achievement

Module outcome	Quartile of school achievement				
	Low %	Lower middle %	Upper middle %	High %	Total %
Successful outcome:					
Assessed – pass	47	45	47	47	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	14	12	16	14	14
Non-successful outcome:					
Assessed – failed	17	15	17	14	16
Withdrew with failure	6	9	8	10	8
Withdrew without failure	4	4	4	6	4
Not yet completed:					
No assessment – studies not yet completed	9	12	8	7	9
Assessed – result withheld	3	3	0	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Although the proportion of non-completers who recorded a non-successful outcome was similar across the quartiles of school achievement, module failure was higher in the modules entered by low school achievers. About 17 per cent of the modules entered by low achievers were failed. The rate for high modules undertaken by high achievers was 14 per cent.

Withdrawal rates were higher in modules undertaken by high achievers in Year 9 literacy and numeracy.

Socioeconomic status

The distribution of module outcomes according to the socioeconomic status is provided in Table 18.

Table 18 Distribution of module outcomes, by socioeconomic status

Module outcome	Socioeconomic status*				
	Low %	Lower middle %	Upper middle %	High %	Total %
Successful outcome:					
Assessed – pass	45	48	49	50	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	14	13	11	13	13
Non-successful outcome:					
Assessed – failed	19	14	16	13	16
Withdrew with failure	8	8	7	8	8
Withdrew without failure	3	5	4	5	4
Not yet completed:					
No assessment – studies not yet completed	9	11	9	9	10
Assessed – result withheld	2	1	4	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

* Details on the derivation of socioeconomic status are provided in the Glossary in Appendix 1.

Although lower numbers of non-completers are from families of high SES, more of them, on average, tend to record a successful outcome or a pass in their VET studies. About 63 per cent of modules were successfully completed of all modules studied by students from the highest quartile of SES. The rate for modules undertaken by non-completers from low SES backgrounds (those in the lowest quartile of SES who make up the largest group of non-completers) was lower — 59 per cent. The differences in success rates are small, in the light of the differences in school success rates of the two groups

More striking is the difference in failure rates. About 30 per cent of non-completers from a low SES background recorded a non-successful outcome and non-completers from low SES backgrounds were much more likely to fail outright — 19 per cent of modules were failed compared to 13 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers from high SES families.

Social background, it would seem, not only exerts an influence in terms of rates of non-completion and rates of participation in VET, but also in terms of achieving a successful outcome or a non-successful outcome for those undertaking VET modules.

Parents' country of birth

The distribution of module outcomes according to the parents' country of birth is provided in Table 19.

There was a notable difference in the proportion of non-completers who did not achieve a successful outcome from non-English-speaking background compared to other non-completers. Rates of non-successful outcomes were higher and rates of successful outcomes lower in modules undertaken by non-completers with parents from non-English-speaking countries compared with students from other backgrounds. Approximately 57 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers from non-English-speaking backgrounds were successfully completed, compared to 60 per cent of those undertaken by other non-completers.

Table 19 Distribution of module outcomes by parents' country of birth

	Parents' country of birth*			
Module outcome	Australia %	Other English-speaking country %	Non-English-speaking country %	Total %
Successful outcome:				
Assessed – pass	47	46	43	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	13	14	14	13
Non-successful outcome:				
Assessed – failed	16	10	22	16
Withdrew with failure	8	4	11	8
Withdrew without failure	4	7	5	4
Not yet completed:				
No assessment – studies not yet completed	9	17	5	9
Assessed – result withheld	3	2	0	3
Total	100	100	100	100

* Details on the derivation of parents' country of birth are provided in the Glossary in Appendix 1.

Module failure rate was six percentage points higher in modules undertaken by non-completers from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Withdrawal rates were also higher in the modules undertaken by non-completers from non-English-speaking backgrounds. About 16 per cent of the modules undertaken by non-completers with parents born in non-English-speaking countries withdrew from their modules, compared to about 12 per cent for those from English-speaking backgrounds.

Urban or rural location

The distribution of module outcomes according to urban or rural location is provided in Table 20.

Table 20 Distribution of module outcomes, by rural or urban place of residence

	Place of residence			
Module outcome	Urban %	Regional %	Rural or remote %	Total %
Successful outcome:				
Assessed – pass	45	50	45	47
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	14	12	15	14
Non-successful outcome:				
Assessed – failed	14	17	18	16
Withdrew with failure	8	7	9	8
Withdrew without failure	6	2	4	4
Not yet completed:				
No assessment – studies not yet completed	11	9	7	9
Assessed – result withheld	2	3	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100

There were minor differences in the rate of successful outcomes across different geographical regions. However, a higher proportion of non-completers from rural and remote localities recorded a non-successful outcome (31 per cent) compared to other non-completers — 26 per cent for non-completers from regional localities and 28 per cent for those from urban areas. There was a higher rate of module failure for non-completers living in rural and remote locations than for those from urban areas — 18 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers in rural or remote locations, 17 per cent in regional centres compared to 14 per cent in urban areas.

6

Conclusions

The aim of this report is to provide information on the characteristics and success rates of non-completers who participated in VET. The report does not attempt to identify factors which influence the progression from Year 9 to post-school destinations (for example, leaving school early and participation in VET). Rather, this study concentrates on describing the characteristics and achievement levels of those non-completers who participated in VET according to their specific study programs.

Despite declining rates of school non-completion, not all young people will remain at school to complete Year 12. The results of this study show that vocational education and training is an important pathway to further education and training for those who do not complete school. Approximately 37 per cent of non-completers had undertaken some sort of VET study shortly after leaving school. It means that given a rate of non-completion of about 21 per cent for this cohort in 1998, only 13 per cent of school students in Australia had not completed Year 12 or continued with some form of further study.

Not all non-completers participate in vocational education and training. There are clear differences in participation according to gender, ethnicity and locality. Of note are the lower participation rates of female non-completers, non-completers from lower SES backgrounds, and those who live in areas experiencing relatively high rates of unemployment. At this initial stage, about 42 per cent of male non-completers were enrolled in the VET sector compared to only 30 per cent of female non-completers. Relatively more non-completers who did not participate in VET came from the lowest quartile of SES. In addition, a higher proportion of non-completers from areas of relatively high unemployment did not participate in VET compared with teenagers from areas with lower levels of unemployment. This has some important implications. It means that in areas where there are job shortages, young people are not undertaking the sorts of education and training that may improve their job prospects. In addition, those who are the least job ready, based on their level of school attainment, are not participating in VET.

Participation in VET varies by the type of course. Over 40 per cent of all non-completers who enrolled in further study entered trade-related courses (preparatory or full trade courses). Most were male. Nearly 57 per cent were undertaking a trade-based course compared to 18 per cent of females, indicating the heavy reliance of male non-completers on trade-related training and the importance of these courses to the success of male non-completers in making the transition to work. Female non-completers were more likely to enrol in a course that teaches other skills.

Not all non-completers are successful in their vocational education and training studies. About 61 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers resulted in a successful outcome, while 28 per cent resulted in failure. About 11 per cent of modules had a result pending. Failure rates varied depending on the type of qualification with the highest failure rates in the most advanced courses — diploma-level courses. Pass rates were highest in trade, and similar level, courses. Module outcomes also varied across different categories of non-completers. Failure rates were lowest in modules undertaken more often by students who performed well at school compared to those who did not perform well at school, by those from English-speaking rather than non-English-speaking backgrounds and by high SES rather than low SES non-completers. However, the differences in success rates between high and low SES groups are small, in the light of the differences in school success rates of the two groups.

Taken together the results provide a picture suggesting that VET is serving the needs of many non-completers of school. Males who do not remain at school until Year 12, for example, have high levels of participation and success in apprenticeship and trade-related courses. These students may well be part of the group of 'positive' or 'opportune' non-completers who, according to Dwyer (1996), leave school to pursue a particular career path or job such as an apprenticeships or undertake study linked to work such as the AQF level III certificates.

But there are also non-completers whose needs are not being met at present. Of concern are the groups of non-completers who Dwyer described as 'reluctant' learners and the 'circumstantial' leavers, those who leave school because they are not succeeding or who leave school for non-educational reasons such as low family income or other family needs. In the current study, the rates of non-participation in VET are higher among the lowest achievers in school and those from lower SES backgrounds — those who are more often 'reluctant' learners and 'circumstantial' leavers. Furthermore, among these groups of non-completers those who do participate in VET experience higher rates of module failure.

In this context, it is necessary for VET to enhance its role as a pathway to work for non-completers. The VET system is already an important source of education and training for non-completers. Yet, some groups of non-completers, more often those who have not done well at school and those who have left for non-career reasons are not enrolling in VET courses. These non-completers attempt to make the transition to work without participating in any forms of formal education and training. They are the most vulnerable, not only in terms of finding work, but also getting the levels of training needed to enhance their careers once they are in jobs. The VET system, as a provider of vocational training that is more directly responsive to industry requirements, and as a link to university, provides one of the few avenues for many of these groups of young people to re-start their education and to obtain employment-oriented training.

The results of this report present a challenge to VET providers as they indicate that more needs to be done to assist the non-completers of school who are reluctant learners and circumstantial leavers to participate and succeed in VET courses that will better prepare them for the labour market. It is important that VET remains flexible and continues to provide diversity in the range of courses it offers in order to cater for the varied needs of Year 12 non-completers. The current study included data up until 1998 and by that time it was not possible to assess if all courses studied by non-completers lead to secure employment outcomes; nor was it possible to test whether some courses provide superior employment outcomes. These longer-term effects will form part of the LSAY analytical program over the next few years as the cohort ages.

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APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND MEASURES

The terms used in this report were defined as follows.

Non-completion: Young people who left school without completing Year 12 were defined as non-completers. This included those who began the final year but left without completing, as well as those who left prior to Year 12. Information on the year and month respondents left school was drawn from the 1996, 1997 and 1998 data collections. Persons who had left secondary school before August of Year 12 in 1998 were classified as non-completers. The exception to this was the small number of sample members who completed Year 12 in 1997, a year earlier than the great majority of the cohort; such young people were included in the Year 12 completers group. Of the non-completion group, 8 per cent left before the end of Year 10, and 13 per cent left after Year 10 but before August of Year 12 in 1998. In a number of Tables the former group is referred to as "Year 10 or less", and the latter as "Year 11 or more". The latter group includes some sample members who left during Year 11 without completing that year.

Parents' education: This variable represents the highest level of parents' education (the highest attained by the mother or father). Four levels were used: (1) did not complete school, (2) school certificate, (3) post-school qualification, (4) university degree.

Parents' birthplace: The birthplace variable was coded according to three categories: (1) Australian-born, (2) born in another English-speaking country and (3) born in a non-English-speaking country. To be classified as (1) Australian-born, at least one parent had to be born in Australia. To be classified as (2) other English-speaking, at least one parent had to be born in an English-speaking country other than Australia. To be classified as non-English-speaking, both parents had to be born in a non-English-speaking country.

Parents' socioeconomic status: This variable was derived by assigning occupational status scores based on the 100 point ANU3 scale. This scale was then converted into quartiles of SES.

Place of residence: Respondents were classified into three groups based on the location of their home address in Year 9: (1) rural, (2) regional and (3) metropolitan.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): A nationally consistent set of qualifications for all post-compulsory education and training in Australia, as follows:

- higher education sector – doctoral degree, masters degree, graduate diploma, graduate certificate, bachelor degree, advanced diploma, diploma
- vocational education and training sector – advanced diploma, diploma, certificate IV, certificate III, certificate II, certificate I
- school sector – senior secondary certificate of education.
- Under the AQF, a statement of attainment is issued for partial completion of a qualification

Type of school attended: This measure refers to the type of school attended at the time of the first survey contact, ie Year 9 in 1995. Three categories are used: (1) government school, (2) Catholic school, and (3) non-Catholic private school.

Early school achievement: School achievement is a score which combines results from standardised reading and mathematics tests administered to sample members in Year 9 in 1995. For this report, the achievement scores were divided into quartiles from lowest (1) to highest (4).

Module: A unit of education or training that can be completed on its own or as part of a course. Modules may also result in the attainment of one or more units of competency.

Median household income: Median household income was obtained from the ABS SEIFA Index derived from the ABS 1996 census. The median household income variable was mapped to the Year 9 residential postcode.

Unemployment rate of residential locality: The unemployment rate was obtained from the ABS SEIFA Index derived from the ABS 1996 census. The total unemployment rate was mapped to the Year 9 residential postcode.

Proximity to a TAFE Institute: Proximity to a TAFE Institute was obtained using the methodology outlined in the Appendix of *Australian VET 1997: Commuter distance, an overview* (NCVER, 1998). The relevant commuter distance was mapped to the Year 9 residential postcode.

APPENDIX 2: TABLES A1 TO A10

Table A1 Distribution of non-completers from the Y95 cohort, by selected background characteristics

Characteristic	Column percentages		
	Non-completers	Year 12 completers	Total
Gender			
Males	58	45	48
Females	42	55	52
Early school achievement			
Lowest	39	15	20
Lower middle	30	23	24
Upper middle	18	28	26
Highest	13	34	30
School type			
Government	80	60	65
Catholic	11	22	19
Independent non-Catholic	9	18	16
Ethnicity[+++]			
Australian-born	85	78	80
Other-English	8	7	7
Non-English-speaking	7	15	13
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	5	1	2
Non-Indigenous	95	99	98
Geographic locality			
Urban	42	58	55
Regional	31	24	25
Rural or remote	27	18	20
Socioeconomic status			
Lowest	34	21	24
Lower middle	30	25	26
Upper middle	20	25	24
Highest	16	29	26
Parents' education			
Lowest (did not complete school)	3	1	2
Lower middle (school certificate)	44	32	34
Upper middle (post-school qual.)	34	28	29
Highest (university degree)	19	40	36
Total (Sample size)	2067	7671	9738
(%)	21	79	100

[+++] Ethnicity is based on parents' country of birth (see Glossary).

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Table A2 Distribution of VET participants who were non-completers, by selected background characteristics

Characteristic	Column percentages		
	Did not participate in VET	Participated in VET	Total
Gender			
Males	54	66	58
Females	46	34	42
Early school achievement			
Lowest	39	37	38
Lower middle	30	30	30
Upper middle	18	19	18
Highest	13	14	13
School type			
Government	88	86	87
Catholic	9	12	10
Independent non-Catholic	3	2	3
Ethnicity			
Australian-born	84	88	85
Other-English	9	6	8
Non-English-speaking	7	6	7
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	6	4	5
Non-Indigenous	94	96	95
Geographic location			
Urban	43	39	42
Regional	32	29	31
Rural or remote	24	32	27
Socioeconomic status			
Lowest	36	31	34
Lower middle	30	30	30
Upper middle	19	21	20
Highest	15	19	16
Parents' education			
Lowest (did not complete school)	3	2	3
Lower middle (school certificate)	45	42	44
Upper middle (post-school qual)	32	39	34
Highest (university degree)	21	17	19
Median household income*			
$399.50	23	27	25
$599.50	43	42	43
$849.50	31	26	29
$1249.50	3	5	4
Proximity to a TAFE institute			
Less than 2 kms	36	29	34
Between 2 and 10 kms	45	50	47
Over 10 kms	18	21	19
Unemployment rate of residential locality			
Less than 6 per cent	17	20	18
Between 6 and 10 per cent	46	44	45
Between 10 and 14 per cent	20	23	21
Over 14 per cent	17	13	16
Total (Sample size)	*1302*	*765*	*2067*
(%)	*63*	*37*	*100*

Details on the measures used are provided in Appendix 1.

* Median household income of $799.50 has been excluded because of small numbers in this cell.

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Table A3 Module outcomes, by type of course

Module outcome	Type of course						
	Personal enrichment %	Basic skills %	Initial vocational %	Trade-related %	Other skills-related %	Higher level %	Total %
Successful outcome:							
Assessed – pass	2	16	14	39	23	6	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	6	42	10	28	10	4	100
Non-successful outcome:							
Assessed – failed	2	22	12	31	26	7	100
Withdrew with failure	0	28	16	26	22	8	100
Withdrew without failure	0	19	21	25	27	8	100
Not yet completed:							
No assessment – studies not yet completed	0	6	19	39	26	10	100
Assessed – result withheld	4	30	11	22	22	11	100
Total	2	21	14	34	22	7	100

Table A4 Module outcomes, by level of qualification

Module outcome	Qualification level							
	AQF Diplomas and equiv %	AQF Cert IV and equiv %	AQF Cert III and equiv %	AQF Cert I and II %	Other certificate %	Statement of attainment %	Other including non award %	Total %
Successful outcome:								
Assessed – pass	1	6	33	24	12	10	13	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	1	4	18	22	15	15	26	100
Non-successful outcome:								
Assessed – failed	1	7	29	25	15	9	15	100
Withdrew with failure	1	7	26	24	15	16	9	100
Withdrew without failure	0	8	30	23	19	8	12	100
Not yet completed:								
No assessment – studies not yet completed	2	8	37	33	10	2	8	100
Assessed – result withheld	2	9	11	33	11	17	17	100
Total	1	6	30	25	13	10	15	100

Table A5 Module outcomes, by school attainment

Module outcome	Left by end of Year 10 %	Left in Year 11 or 12 %	Total %
Successful outcome:			
Assessed – pass	45	55	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	42	58	100
Non-successful outcome:			
Assessed – failed	42	58	100
Withdrew with failure	38	62	100
Withdrew without failure	45	55	100
Not yet completed:			
No assessment – studies not yet completed	41	59	100
Assessed – result withheld	54	46	100
Total	43	57	100

Table A6 Module outcomes, by gender

Module outcome	Male %	Female %	Total %
Successful outcome:			
Assessed – pass	70	30	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	75	25	100
Non-successful outcome:			
Assessed – failed	73	27	100
Withdrew with failure	58	42	100
Withdrew without failure	57	43	100
Not yet completed:			
No assessment – studies not yet completed	67	33	100
Assessed – result withheld	63	37	100
Total	69	31	100

Table A7 Module outcomes, by quartiles of school achievement

Module outcome	Quartile of school achievement				
	Low %	Lower middle %	Upper middle %	High %	Total %
Successful outcome:					
Assessed – pass	39	28	19	14	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	38	26	22	14	100
Non-successful outcome:					
Assessed – failed	41	27	20	12	100
Withdrew with failure	30	33	20	17	100
Withdrew without failure	34	28	20	18	100
Not yet completed:					
No assessment – studies not yet completed	35	38	16	11	100
Assessed – result withheld	48	35	4	13	100
Total	38	29	19	14	100

Table A8 Module outcomes, by socioeconomic status

Module outcome	Socioeconomic status				
	Low %	Lower middle %	Upper middle %	High %	Total %
Successful outcome:					
Assessed – pass	31	31	19	19	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	36	31	16	17	100
Non-successful outcome:					
Assessed – failed	41	26	19	14	100
Withdrew with failure	35	30	16	19	100
Withdrew without failure	23	37	19	21	100
Not yet completed:					
No assessment – studies not yet completed	31	35	18	16	100
Assessed – result withheld	29	18	35	18	100
Total	34	30	19	17	100

Table A9 Module outcomes by parents' country of birth

Module outcome	Australia %	Other English-speaking Country %	Non-English-speaking country %	Total %
Successful outcome:				
Assessed – pass	87	7	6	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	85	8	7	100
Non-successful outcome:				
Assessed – failed	87	4	9	100
Withdrew with failure	87	4	9	100
Withdrew without failure	79	12	8	100
Not yet completed:				
No assessment – studies not yet completed	84	12	4	100
Assessed – result withheld	93	7	0	100
Total	86	7	7	100

Table A10 Module outcomes, by rural or urban place of residence

Module outcome	Urban %	Regional %	Rural or remote %	Total %
Successful outcome:				
Assessed – pass	36	30	34	100
No assessment – satisfactory completion of class hours	39	24	37	100
Non-successful outcome:				
Assessed – failed	31	30	39	100
Withdrew with failure	36	26	38	100
Withdrew without failure	55	13	32	100
Not yet completed:				
No assessment – studies not yet completed	45	28	27	100
Assessed – result withheld	37	35	28	100
Total	37	28	35	100

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